Conflict Management, Communication & Problem Solving

Tony Picchioni, Ph.D.
Baylor University Medical Center
Southern Methodist University
Let’s Begin with a Few Questions

What comes to mind when you think about conflict?
What is different between destructive and constructive conflict and how do you transform from destructive to constructive?
What is your conflict style…the pattern that returns over and over again?
Conflict Management
# Three Types of Conflict

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<th>1. INTRA</th>
<th>2. INTER</th>
<th>3. STRUCTURAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Inside the individual</td>
<td>Between individuals</td>
<td>Rules of the game</td>
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<td>• Cognitive dissonance</td>
<td>• Communications</td>
<td>• Resources</td>
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<td>• Unresolved issues</td>
<td>• Perceptions</td>
<td>• Scarcity</td>
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<td>• Mood states</td>
<td>• Status</td>
<td>• Organizational structure</td>
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<td>• Physical health</td>
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<td>• Unconscious bias</td>
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Interpersonal Conflict

This book explains the key dynamics of interpersonal conflict in multiple settings.

A recommended reading for insights and skills development.
Defining Interpersonal Conflict

“Discomforting difference.”

Conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties, who perceive incompatibility goals, scarce resources, and interference from others from achieving their goals.
All Conflict is Personal… *We Stand as Possible Opponent to the Will of Another*

- The Social Self
- The Protective Self
- The Private Self
- The Core Self

- Face Saving
- Defense Mechanism
- Subjective Truth
- Identity
Attention density requires repetition (deep practice) and learning from mistakes coupled with performance coaching all of which result in self-directed neuroplasticity.
Studies reveal that insight appears to come out of nowhere, the brain is usually preparing itself for new awareness (cognitive deliberation), this is the “preparatory phase.” During the “search phase,” the brain begins looking for answers, this is followed by the “relaxation phase” during which the cortex becomes less defensive and begins to relax. The mind is allow to consider possibilities and reflect on them and the brain moves from the logical left hemisphere to the creative right hemisphere.

Jonah Lehrer
The Eureka Hunt -The New Yorker (Jul.28,2008)
Somantic Marker Model

First, using feeling language acknowledge others’ feelings (empathy)

Second, let the other tell their story
“We are pawns in a game whose forces we largely fail to comprehend. We usually think of ourselves as sitting in the driver’s seat, with ultimate control over the decisions we make and the direction our life takes; but, alas, this perception has more to do with our desires – with how we want to view ourselves – than with reality.”

Dan Ariely
*Predictably Irrational*
References

We are all on a search. To find books to help and make sense of the world, to help one to grow and to become a better person, and to help to get the big questions into focus is one of the real joys of reading.
Exercise: The Four Awful Truths of Conflict

1. Conflict is **unavoidable**. Do you agree or disagree, why?
2. Conflict involves **risk** and **cost**. **What are the risks, what are the costs?**
3. Dysfunctional conflict strategies are **more damaging** than the conflict itself. **Do you have an example from personal experience?**
4. Conflict can do **permanent damage**. **Why is it permanent?**
Conflicts can be viewed from three lenses:

- **Evaluative**
- **Facilitative**
- **Transformative**
Conflict Instrument
Learning your Conflict Pattern

Concern for Substance and meeting Objectives
(Dominating) (Flexible)

Concern for Building and Maintaining Relationships

Competing
- People are less important than the goal - Hard on people, hard on issues - Single issue driven - Win - Lose

Collaborating
- Deliberate and intentional - Mutually winning

Avoiding
- Neither issue nor relationship matter - Maybe a tactic - Silence - Rusted out employees - Lose - Lose

Accommodating
- The "Yes" person - Relationship first, goals second - Lose - Win

Compromising
- All that can be reasonably gotten - Half a loaf is better than no loaf - Win - Win
Moving from Reaction to Strategic Reflection

- **Reactive**
  - Habits
  - Emotional
  - Stressed
  - Threat to identity
  - Survival oriented brain

- **Conflic**
  - One millisecond is enough for you to arrive at a feeling state

- **Conflict**
  - When you travel a neural pathway over and over again, it becomes a habit

- **Reciprocity**

- **Diagnose**
  - Analyze
  - Strategic

- **Reflective:**
  - The Brain as Internal CEO
  - Appropriate Technique/Tools

- **Four P's**
  - Pause
  - Perspective
  - Prepare
  - Presentation

- **Threshold of Control**
  - (Amygdala Hijack)

- **Feedback**

- **The mind & brain are plastic in nature**

*Image note: The brain and associated neural pathways are depicted with labels such as 'Amygdala Hijack,' 'Hippocampus,' and 'Nucleus accumbens.'*
Affect Cognitive Imbalance

- What makes this feeling so strong that it prevents working the problem?

What causes this amount of affect/feelings?

Readiness to explore
The Conflict Triangle

- Rigid ------- Flexible

Personality
- Data
- Structure
- Interest

Problem
- Relationship
- Values

Process
- Styles
- Skills
- Perspective
- Narrative
**Exercise:** Discuss a work related problem from one of the five elements of conflict shown below:

- **Data conflicts are caused by:**
  - Lack of information
  - Misinformation
  - Different views on what is relevant
  - Different interpretations of data
  - Different assessment procedures

- **Interest conflicts are caused by:**
  - Perceived or actual competitiveness
  - Substantive (content) interests
  - Procedural interests
  - Psychological interests

- **Structural conflicts are caused by:**
  - Destructive patterns of behavior or interaction
  - Unequal control, ownership, or distribution of resources
  - Unequal power and authority
  - Geographic, physical, or environmental factors that hinder cooperation
  - Time constraints

- **Value conflicts are caused by:**
  - Different criteria for evaluating ideas or behavior
  - Exclusive intrinsically valuable goals
  - Different ways of life, ideology, and religion

- **Possible Value-Related Interventions:**
  - Avoid defining problems in terms of value
  - Allow parties to agree and to disagree
  - Create spheres of influence in which one set of values dominates
  - Search for super-ordinate goal that all parties share

- **Possible Structural Interventions:**
  - Clearly define and change roles
  - Replace destructive behavior patterns
  - Allocate ownership or control of resources
  - Establish a fair and mutually acceptable decision-making process
  - Change negotiation process from positional to interest-based bargaining
  - Modify means of influence used by parties (less coercion, more persuasion)
  - Change physical and environmental relationships of parties (closeness and distance)
  - Modify external pressure on parties
  - Change time constraints (more or less time)

- **Possible Data Interventions:**
  - Reach agreement on what data are important
  - Agree on process to collect data
  - Develop common criteria to assess data
  - Use third-party experts to gain outside opinion or break deadlocks

- **Possible Interest-Based Interventions:**
  - Focus on interest, not positions
  - Look for objective criteria
  - Develop integrative solutions that address needs of all parties
  - Search for ways to expand options or resources
  - Develop trade-offs to satisfy interest of divergent strengths

**Possible Relationship Interventions:**
- Control expressions of emotions through procedure, ground rules, caucuses, etc.
- Promote expression of emotions by legitimizing feelings and providing a process
- Clarify perceptions and build positive perceptions
- Improve quality and quantity of communication
- Block negative repetitive behavior by changing structure
- Encourage positive problem-solving
Social Transformation of Conflict

1. Problem Solving
   *Disagree, but share problem*

2. Shift from Disagreement to Personal Antagonism
   *Person seen as problem*

3. Issue Proliferation
   *From Specific to General*

4. Triangle
   *Talk about not with*

5. Eye for Eye
   *Reaction and Escalation*

6. Antagonism to Hostility

7. Polarization
   *Change in Social Organization*

MORE VIOLENCE | LESS TRUST | LESS ACCURATE COMMUNICATIONS | LESS DIRECT CONTACT
---|---|---|---
Destructive | Constructive
## Perception

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>Disputes</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Celebrate</td>
<td>• Single issue driven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Significant to one or more</td>
<td>• Goal is to process in the here and now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Present moment</td>
<td>• A ➔ P (repositioning the problem)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• B ➔ P (repositioning the problem)</td>
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**Perceptual Threshold**

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<th>Conflict</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Multiple unresolved disputes</td>
<td>• Complex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Historic- past tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• A &lt;&gt; B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Process is poor</td>
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Conditions Necessary for Productive Conflict

**Necessary Preconditions**
- Honest, Transparent, Communication
- Prior Relationships
- Issue Focused/ Small
- Flexible
- Focus on Objective Aspects

**CONSTRUCTIVE**
- Creative Thinking
- Mutual Problem Solving
- Benefit of the Doubt
- Negotiation

**DESTRUCTIVE**
- Overly Competitive
- Consistent/Face Saving
- Misrepresentation
- Ladder of Inference

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Cycles of Cooperation

POSITIVE CYCLE OF COOPERATION

Options generation

Openness of communication

LITTLE TO NO RELATIONAL DAMAGE/ POSITIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Joint problem solving

Shared information

Cycles of Cooperation

POSITIVE CYCLE OF COOPERATION

Options generation

Openness of communication

LITTLE TO NO RELATIONAL DAMAGE/ POSITIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Joint problem solving

Shared information
Cycles of conflict

TWO PHASE CONFLICT RESOLUTION MODEL

DIFFERENTIATION PHASE
Adequate differentiation is necessary for constructive conflict resolution

INTEGRATION PHASE
Realization that conflict lies in the incompatibility of positions

Tipping Point

Conflict Issue Surfaces
Conflict is personalized
Positions Stated
Tension between parties contrast

Appreciate similarities

Acknowledge common goals

Admit to ambivalence

Recast as external debate
The most direct link between the stress of differentiation and escalation is the tendency for people to cling inflexibly to patterns of interactions that occur during differentiation.

Possible responses to the demands of differentiation in conflict situations.
Symptoms of Escalation

1. An issue takes longer to deal with than was anticipated.
2. Parties repeatedly offer the same argument in support of a position.
3. Parties over-inflate the consequences of not reaching an agreement.
4. Threat and coercion are used to win arguments.
5. Mounting tension is felt.
6. The parties get nowhere but seem to be working feverishly.
7. Name calling and personal arguments are used.
8. Immediate polarization on issues or the emergence of coalitions.
9. Hostile eye-gaze or less-direct eye contact between parties.
10. Sarcastic language or humor used as a form of tension release.
11. Heated disagreement seems pointless and about trivial issues.
Escalation Model

**CONFLICT EMERGENCE**
- Incremental Transformations
  - Mirrored by the other side
  - Focus on past
  - Light Tactics → Heavy Tactics
  - Issue Proliferation
    - single → few → many
  - From specific issues to general complaints
  - Doing well → winning → hurting the other
  - Gain Allies – Triangulation
    - alone → to someone → many

**CONFLICT ESCALATION**
- Very Turbulent
- Reactive
- Highly Critical
- “Life and Death” power struggle
- Adaptive level of functioning decreases
- Self-focus is fleeting, projection is rampant
- Alienation
- Speak in stereotypes

**STALEMATE**
- Focus on present and future
- Focus more on needs, less on positions
- Feel secure and safe
- Exhausted from war
- Open to negotiation
- No longer fear of resistance

**DE-ESCALATION / NEGOTIATION**
- Face-saving
- Repairs
- Mutual Gains
- Cognitive restructuring
- Paraphrasing
- Purpose stating
- Feel validated and respected
- Problem solving
  - Issues
  - Position
  - Interest
  - Needs
  - Common ground
  - Mutual agreements
  - Plan of action
  - feedback

**INTRACTABLE CONFLICT / CONFLICT JUNKIES**
When people remain at the flight level for a prolonged period of time, sustaining the conflict becomes more important than resolving it. That is, the conflict gains a life of its own. Combat now becomes a cause, they identify with the conflict. Cause is more important than victory.

How a conflict ends sets the stage for the next conflict.
Healthy and Unhealthy Expressions of Conflict within Organizations

**Divided by Conflict**

- Issues and people are frequently confused, Unable to state opinions for fear of alienation, Abrasive in the way they discuss issues
- Conflict is viewed as wrong or dangerous
- Disagreement means a lack of respect or caring
- Leaders discourage differences
- In the stress of conflict:
  - A few vocal leaders are heard, intimidating members
  - Direct dialogue decreases and indirect dialogue (triangling) increases
- Individuals react defensively or explosively to the views of others
- Discussion focuses on solutions
- Timing is uneven. People delay a decision as long as possible & then rush to take a final vote
- A low tolerance of uncertainty
- People repress inner conflicts caused by past experiences and roll them into the current conflict
Healthy and Unhealthy Expressions of Conflict within Organizations

**Bound Together by Conflict**

+ Issues and people are separated, HARD on issues, Soft on people, They disagree favorably
+ Conflict is viewed as opportunity
+ Disagreement means engagement and involvement
+ Leaders greet open disagreements
+ In the stress of conflict:
  + Many voices are heard (members are energized)
  + Direct dialogue increases
+ Individuals interact thoughtfully with the views of others. Individuals offer their own responses only after making an obvious effort to understand. This requires devoted self discipline
+ Discussion focuses on the process
+ Timing is steady. People foresee issues, plan procedures, examine options, then prepare proposals for final decision
+ A willingness to move calmly through the inevitable periods of uncertainty as all options are considered
+ Each individual is consciously aware of his or her own past hurts or unresolved conflicts and takes responsibility not to project these into the current situation
Communication and Problem Solving
Let’s Talk About The 4 P’s Model

To be rational, use the power of the Four P’s.

PAUSE
PERSPECTIVE
PREPARE
PRESENTATION
Self-Control Mechanism

SIR, ONE LAST QUESTION: WHY DO YOU KEEP DOING THAT?

I'M JUST PRESSING MY PERSONAL "PAUSE" BUTTON. IT HELPS KEEP ME CALM.

Click.
Pause to Gain Self-Control

The 4 P’s:

✦ Pause

Remember, the pause is in your interest. By pausing, you **reclaim** the power of choosing.

Emotional Reaction → **PAUSE** → Control and Options
Getting a New Perspective

The 4 P’s:
- Pause
- **Perspective**
Be Prepared

The 4 P’s:
- Pause
- Perspective
- Prepare
Prepare

The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse

If certain kinds of negativity are allowed to run rampant in a discussion, the relationship is doomed. John Gottman refers to these as the *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*:

- Criticism
- Contempt
- Defensiveness
- Stonewalling
The 4 P’s:
- Pause
- Perspective
- Prepare
- Presentation
Presentation

Moving from Conflict to Dialogue

Three Roads to Travel:

1) Connect
2) Conflict
3) Dialogue
Typical Power Tactics

- **Dominating** – threatening, shouting, lecturing, constantly interrupting, standing up.
- **Manipulating** – cajoling, flattering, bribing, posturing, taking outside position to get attention, to lower the other party’s expectation, or to make room for later concessions.
- **Goading** – insulting, taunting, sneering, demeaning, baiting.
- **Pressuring** – asserting authority, using one’s power base, marshalling allies, name dropping, threatening the adversary’s reputation.
- **Deceiving** – lying or withholding information, revealing confidences.
Appeals to Rights

**Laws, rules, policies, principles, social norms** – disputing parties call on all of these social and institutional rights to help protect themselves.

**Examples:**
- **Presenting** evidence and justification to support one’s case.
- **Defining** the conflict based on how the law may define and judge it (regulatory compliance).
- **Presenting** one self as respectable, well intention, victimize, and having legitimate claims.
- **Painting** the other as immoral, guilty, selfish, and unkind.
- **Hiding** or collecting information with an eye toward a lawsuit.
The “Position” Mindset

**POSITIONS = PREMATURE SOLUTIONS**

“Either you fire her, or I am out of here!”

Typically a party’s position at the start of a mediation – their demands or claimed values – are protective armors.

Positions are backed up implicitly or explicitly by threats. They are often well rehearsed demands and reflect the fear of losing face or backing down.

Most positions are one-sided or premature solutions to a half-understood problem. Parties are operating on incomplete information about the other parties and their proposed solutions are likely unrealistic, or they may be designed to a fixed problem that proves not to be the problem after all.
Redirect and the Open Question

The parties’ job is to change the conversation from a stand-off between dueling positions and how the parties meet their underlying interests.

- **Concentrate on information and interests.** Patiently work to bring out useful information (open-ended questions). Maintaining an attitude of curiosity about their needs.

- **Don’t get distracted.** Don’t become intimidated by the parties use of power and rights mindset. Much of this is theatrical.

- **Give them time to shift gear.** Create an emotionally supportive atmosphere that moves beyond criticism to the telling of uncomfortable facts. Parties will take risks gradually if they see hope of a resolution.

- **Explore the passion / emotion behind their position.** Conflict may be rooted in person’s sense of identity and world view and so a deeply felt conviction not just a tactical proposal.
Facilitating the Movement

Position / claim value / distress ➔ get them to talk about the specifics of the problem and behavior (separate the person from the problem).

- Can you explain how this is upsetting you?
- What makes this a problem for you?

Uncover impacts and consequences

- How has this affected you?

What interests and needs are to be addressed?

- What brought you to care about this so much?

Transformational mediation – forgiveness and reconciliation

- What will it take to let go of this?
Interests, Needs and Aspirations

Interests are the needs and aspirations that motivate someone, the benefits that people are protecting or seeking.

Each person will have many interests, some of them contradictory, some of them not fully recognized by the person themselves.

- Immediate and specific to the situation
- Long-term
- Public and visible
- Private or secret
- Emotional or social
Why Interests Matter

- Interests are the fulcrum of the whole conflict process. They contain the information that helps systems and relationships learn and grow. They are the basis for problem solving and making decisions.
- Focusing on the party’s interests will move the conflict conversation forward.

![Conflict Triangle Diagram]

**Problem**
- Define the problem in a way that opens up a range of potential solutions.
- Articulate, clarify, and legitimize people’s needs and wants.
- Identify what criteria a successful agreement will need to meet.
- Frame their needs as mutual problem and increasing motivation to work together in resolving them.

**Process** (communication)
- Provide a focal point for conversation. The goal of “finding out what matter to each person” helps everyone at the table know what to listen for, how to sort it out, and how to understand what gets priority.

**People**
- Summarize a person’s hope and needs minus emotional coloration and demands that block listening.
- Discover the complexity and context of problems.
- Increase people’s willingness to care (empathy about the needs of the other participants).
**Framing Interests**

**Zooming in**...from a broad interests to more specifics.
- Broad interests are useful for creating a spirit of cooperation.

**Zooming out**...from a surface interests to more encompassing.
- Care needs to be taken that constructing a too narrowly conceived interest may be interpreted as a position. You have to find the right level of interest for discussion.

**Zoom Out** Questions:
- What policy changes may clarify the situation?
- Have you dealt creatively with similar problems?

**Zoom In** Questions:
- If you did decide to cancel the project, what steps would you need to take?
- What specific ideas do you have on how to make that work?

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**Polarization**

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**Solutions Created**

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**Zoom to the right level of specificity**
Opening Up Possibilities

“Changing hats…”
- Ask everyone to put on a new hat for a minute…“How does this proposed option look when you put on a new hat?”

Magic wands
- If you could wave a wand and this disappears, how would you solve the problem?

Visioning or ideal future…
- What would in detail, the future would look like, and the steps necessary to get us there if we could create an alternative future?

What’s working now…
- What are the participants already doing that works and that they can build on?
Tool Box

- Intentional listening
- Open ended questions
- Cognitive / affective empathy
- Clarifying questions
- Reframing
- Summarizing
- Follow-up questions
- Going below the position
- Asking about impact
- Option generation

- Patience
- Tone
- Non-judgmental
- Empowerment
- Echo responses
- Flip it
- Brainstorming
- What ifs
- Fallbacks
- Use of metaphors
Anatomy of Hard Talks

A closer look at what makes a conversation fail.

In a *live* conversation, the characteristics that make the conversation fail and what to do about it are not obvious.
Anatomy of Hard Talks

Three Basic Traits of Hard Talks

**First**, there is the **Combat Mentality**, the attitude that difficult conversations are battles with winners and losers. The picture in their mind is how to fight or fight back.

- Win-Lose Battlefield
- Attack and Counter Attack
- Escalation
- Revenge Psychology

When a conversation no longer seems simply hard, but feels threatening, confusing, and unpredictable, it starts to look like combat. It is the central reason for the real and lasting damage between people.
Anatomy of Hard Talks

Check-Out in Yourself

- Intimidation
- Unwillingness to Listen
- Manipulation
- Power over Others
- Control
- Zero-sum Thinking

The combat model won’t get good results, but the more we work from it the more accustomed to it and invested in it we become.
Three Basic Traits of Hard Talks

Second, difficult conversations carry heavier emotional loads – particularly anger, fear (anxiety), and embarrassment – than normal conversations do. When we are flooded with strong emotions we do not act intentionally.

When the conversation is tough, emotions fall into and feed off each others in inconsistent patterns, making it hard to see what we’re dealing with at any point. You want to leave your signature emotional status for they replay our emotional history.
Emotional reactions are the “voices” that articulate the values that are implicated in any given situation. Emotional expressions clearly indicates an investment in the situation.
“Anybody can become angry, that is easy; but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way, that is not within everybody’s power. That is not easy.”
Anatomy of Hard Talks

Check-Out in Yourself

- Emotional Confrontation
- Level of Emotional Self-Control
- Talking Fast
- Over Talking
Anatomy of Hard Talks

Three Basic Traits of Hard Talks

Third, Perceptions are distorted in conflict situations, usually narrowed. It’s hard to read what’s happening. It’s hard to read the other side’s intentions.

Due to a narrowing of perception when members of opposing sides do listen to each other, they scan for flaws, rarely attempting to deepen this understanding of each other.
Anatomy of Hard Talks

Check-Out in Yourself

- What’s the magnification of your lens?
- Do you put yourself in the other person’s shoes?
- Are you cherry picking Information?
Anatomy of Hard Talks

The Deadly Triad

Combat Mentality

Emotional Loading

Misconception

We Rarely deal with just one of them at a time.
12 Principles of Diffusing

1. Deal with the Feelings First
   A fundamental principle of diffusing is that you must deal with the anger and frustration first since an angry person tends to think unclearly and less rationally.

2. Avoid coming across as Bureaucratic
   It's better to express a bit of personality, smile, and use the person’s name and your name if possible. Also, avoid bureaucratic language.

3. Each situation is different
   What we know is that the more a person sees you as a gear in the bureaucratic machinery, the more he/she can see you as an object, and this means more abuse.

4. Strive to Control the Interaction
   Your two major tasks when dealing with a hostile person are to acknowledge their feelings and attempt to get them to respond to you. Often you will be doing both at the same time.
Twelve Principles of Diffusing

5. Begin diffusing early
   The more the situation escalates, the more time, energy, and upset it is going to create. If they look tense, glance at their watch, scowl, etc., then you should be particularly sure that you diffuse immediately.

6. Be Assertive, not Aggressive or Passive
   Being assertive means that you act in a confident way and that you talk calmly but firmly if necessary. It also means that your physical posture must be confident rather than too passive or aggressive.

7. If you Lose Control of Yourself, you Lose Period
   The very worst thing you can do with a hostile person is to lose control of your own emotions. When you allow yourself to get angry and respond aggressively, you are going to have an argument.

8. What You Focus On, You Get More Of
   This principle has a specific application. When a hostile person acts in an aggressive manner, you have a choice of being confrontational or acknowledging the feelings and refocusing back to the problem.
9. Don’t Supply Ammunition
   Your words and actions can be used against you.

10. Don’t Ask Questions you Don’t Want to Hear Answers to
    Questions depend on the situation. You need to judge whether there is anything to be gained by asking a particular question. Be aware that questions encourage others to continue on the topic of the question. If you ask the wrong question you may open Pandora’s Box.

11. Avoid Inadvertent Errors
    Go to the balcony and observe your behavior. Shift your perspective. Put yourself in the other’s shoes. That can help.

12. Avoid high risk, high gain behavior
    High risk, high gain behavior is behavior that when it works is very effective in diffusing. When it doesn’t work, it escalates the conflict to an extreme degree. Examples include telling others to be quiet and the use of humor.
Characteristics of Flexible People

1. **Humility**: We are flawed and make mistakes and should be open to someone challenging our point of view.

2. **Listening and Respecting**: We should give others the courtesy of actually responding to their ideas and arguments rather than destroying them personally. We may have something to learn from a contrary viewpoint.

3. **Avoid Binary Thinking**: The issues of our time are too important and complex to put into simplistic “us vs. them” antagonism.

4. **Avoiding Dismissive Words and Phrases**: It may feel good to score these rhetorical points, but that is how dialogue becomes polarize and destructive. Hatefulness only divides us and never brings us together.

5. **Leading with what You are For**: We can forcefully say what we believe without belittling others. We may even find some grounds on which we can agree.
Out beyond the idea of right-doing and wrong-doing,

There is a field.
I’ll meet you there.

- From The Essential Rumi. Translated by Coleman Barks. 1995.

“Does not every human conflict reveal universal characteristics as well as the problems of the individual.”

- Rollo May

“A conflict has ruined my past. I am beginning to toy with the idea of forgiveness so that I don’t allow conflict to destroy my future as well.”

- Lynn Shriner